

Close call: Team Charleston airmen save life of retiree

By Senior Airman Donald Church
437 AW Public Affairs

A local Hanahan retiree survived two close calls recently thanks largely in part to military training and several dedicated members of Team Charleston.

Retired U.S. Army Master Sgt. James Christman was returning home from the base shopette when his 1989 Ford Aerostar van began filling with smoke from an electrical fire under the dashboard.

"I pulled the van over near the Air Park as soon as I realized what was happening," said Christman. "I keep a fire extinguisher in the van just in case something like this happens. I remember putting out the fire moments after I pulled over, but not much else."

Unfortunately, the experience was not over yet. The stress of the situation caused Christman's heart to momentarily stop, setting off a chest implant that is designed to electrically restart his heart immediately after having a problem.

"Normally I might have a shock every couple of weeks, but that day the doctors said I went through 22 of them in rapid succession," said Christman. "The device only holds around 150 charges and usually would last me well over a year."

A security forces member at the Rivers Gate, Airman 1st Class Kevin Hopp, was the first to spot Christman having problems. He relayed the information to 437th Security Forces Squad-

ron control center, who notified the paramedics. Staff Sgt. Richard Lane and Staff Sgt. Denis Woods from the security forces squadron were among the first to arrive on scene.

"I was surprised to hear him speak when we arrived," Lane said. "He just did not look like he should be able to talk. Thankfully he was able to pass along the names of his doctors and some other information that was critical for the medical folks to have."

Senior Airman Ronnie Godbolt and Senior Airman Renata Sutton, both emergency medical technicians with the 437th Medical Group, arrived on scene.

"When we arrived, he was sitting on the ground and he looked bad," Sutton said. "By the time we put him on the stretcher, he coded. We started CPR. County EMS arrived on the scene."

The technicians inserted a tube down Christman's throat to help him breathe and administered emergency drugs. However, his pulse faded and the technicians shocked his heart 10 times to stabilize it. He was first transported to Roper Hospital North, then taken to the Medical University of South Carolina. He was treated and released four days later.

Christman and his wife later visited Sutton at the base clinic to thank her. "I didn't recognize him at first," Sutton said. "They were very sweet and thankful. We all cried."

"I just want to thank the professionals who were helping me that day," Christman said. "Words are hardly adequate to express my appreciation for what they did for me."

New AMC policy safeguards patients' medical information

By 2nd Lt. Greg Chapman
437th Medical Group

Patient confidentiality and privacy are always a high priority medical concern. That is why the Air Mobility Command Surgeon has issued a policy letter directing all Air Force pharmacies to implement various safeguards to prevent unauthorized access to your medical information and outlines the necessary steps required to allow a representative to pick up your prescriptions.

Effective May 1, the pharmacy will require strict compliance to this AMC policy. This should give customers plenty of time to make the necessary arrangements.

A patient representative includes spouses, parents, and legal guardians, as well as courier services, and any other individual so designated and authorized by the patient in writing. The pharmacy may release prescription medications to designated patient representatives provided all the following requirements are met. The patient representative must:

1. Possess a valid photo ID card
2. Possess a patient's ID card or a copy of the same to include front and back
3. Have a signed statement from the patient authorizing the representative to act on his/her behalf for this purpose. There is no requirement for this statement to be notarized.

If an individual other than the parent or legal guardian of a dependent child is designated to act as a representative, the same requirements exist.

For more information on the policy letter, call 963-6805.